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Job Well Done Builds Confidence

Khairkut District residents are building trust and confidence in USAID projects



Photo: USAID/CDP/CADG

Workers build an irrigation canal in Khairkut District, Paktika Province.

Residents cite rapid project implementations and timely direct payments as leading reasons for district-wide interest in new community-based projects.

“When the first irrigation project came to Khairkut, we were slow to register to work there. We had doubts about the project because lots of people had made promises to help us before but none of them delivered on their promises. Our forefathers went to their graves with hope in their hearts that these lands would be developed,” said Mahmoud Ahmad, a worker at the second project in Khairkut District of Paktiya Province.

He waves his hands to indicate that these concerns are all in the past. “Now, it is entirely different. We had our doubts until the first payday on the first project. After we saw that USAID delivered the materials and paid us on time, everyone in the district was interested in working on the project.”

Ahmad and others suggest that USAID has developed a positive reputation in the province through the projects’ rapid implementation and timely, direct payment to project laborers. “This is very important,” states Ahmad. “People can ask their family members to come back from Iran and Pakistan to work on good projects in their own village. Other village leaders also come here because they have heard about these initiatives.”

After a successful implementation of the first USAID-funded irrigation project, the residents of the Khairkut District have gained confidence to actively seek new development projects for work.

While the components of a positive reputation may be simple, the impact can be surprisingly strong. A Paktika Provincial Council Member notes that several villagers in the Yaya Khel villages have chosen to take personal risk in order to obtain USAID projects. In the past, they would have taken money from the insurgents, but now that they have been given the option, they rather work with USAID to rebuild their communities.